

# **New Project Aims to Save Hawaii's Moving Image History**

By Oscar Valenzuela - [bio](#) | [email](#)

The University of Hawaii's new West Oahu Campus will be home to a unique collection. In addition to its book collection, the main library will hold thousands of hours of Hawaii's history, all captured on video. A new archives project is currently underway to search for and restore lost and forgotten reels.

In 2008 local filmmaker Heather Giugni established Ulu Ulu: The Henry Kuualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawaii.

The project fulfills a vision shared by many historians and archivists alike, to locate and safeguard Hawaii's moving image history. Neglected for decades, thousands of old videotapes and film reels have been shelved away in museums, TV stations and private collections.

Giugni says finding these old reels is akin to finding priceless artifacts, "You unlock this treasure chest that's dusty and moldy and it's kind of gross to inhale, you see things that you didn't even know existed, that you'd never seen before. It's like Raiders of the Lost Ark."

The Archives has already collected over ten thousand videotapes, including the entire KGMB 9 nine news collection.

Governor Neil Abercrombie was invited to watch some archival footage at the Archives temporary facility. On a computer monitor an old clip replayed a roundtable discussion featuring then "Congressman" Abercrombie. "Just hearing myself repeat the fact that what we were dealing with in 1987 was something that was being argued about in 1963." recollected the Governor.

Head Archivist Janel Quirante is responsible for restoring, transferring and cataloging the collected items. But the shelf life of all these items is nearly up. "Even the equipment that's needed to play it back is no longer being manufactured. said Quirante.

Quirante and her team meticulously screen each film reel and cassette. However, the footage will not be copied to more tape, it will all be converted into digital files. "With digital form we can make multiple copies without generational loss." Quirante explained.

**With digital copies there is no loss in quality and no loss of physical tapes or reels. The video information will be kept on servers and access will be available globally through a website portal.**

**Executive Hollywood producer Chris Lee runs the University of Hawaii's Academy for Creative Media and co-founded the project with Giugni. "We will be the premiere one of a kind state of the art digital facility on the Pacific rim. This is our history, increasingly more than ever, we live in a visually driven society, you know if people don't see it they don't believe it actually happened." he said.**

**Nearly one hundred years of local history, captured by countless cameramen and journalists, the Ulu Ulu Archive is working to ensure these images are never lost again.**

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